

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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R 270840Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9836

INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 4938

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AN, NZ

SUBJ: KIRK VISIT TO SINGAPORE

SUMMARY: NEW ZEALAND PRIME MINISTER KIRK HELD USEFUL
AND CANDID TALKS WITH PM LEE AND HIS MINISTERS DURING
KIRK'S RECENT VISIT TO SINGAPORE. ANZUK COMMAND WILL BE
DISSOLVED IN STAGES WITH SEPARATE NEW ZEALAND COMMAND TO BE
ESTABLISHED BY END OF JANUARY AND SEPARATE BRITISH COMMAND
TO BE SET UP FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF AUSTRALIAN WITHDRAWAL.
LEE STRESSED POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING HMG AND GNZ
MILITARY PRESENCE IN SINGAPORE/MALAYSIA. LEE WELCOMED
KIRK'S PROPOSAL FOR CONSULTATIVE ARRANGEMENT INVOLVING
INDONESIA, PNG, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND AND AGREED THAT
REGIONAL GROUPINGS WERE USEFUL IF KEPT LOOSE AND INFORMAL.
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LEE SAID REGION SHOULD NOT BE ORGANIZED INTO TIGHT ECONOMIC

UNIT, AND STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING OPEN TRADING RELATIONSHIPS, PARTICULARLY WITH US. ALTHOUGH KIRK EXPRESSED FEAR OVER GROWING ECONOMIC STRENGTH OF JAPAN, LEE WAS MORE CONCERNED THAT AN AMERICAN WITHDRAWAL FROM THE REGION WOULD WEAKEN JAPAN'S TIES WITH US AND LEAD TO CLOSER JAPANESE TIES WITH CHINA OR USSR, THEREBY MAKING SEA MORE VULNERABLE TO CHINESE OR SOVIET PENETRATION. LEE WAS PESSIMISTIC OVER FUTURE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING NZ HIGH COMMISSIONER FRANCIS, VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER KIRK WENT EXTREMELY WELL. PM LEE AND KIRK HAVE BEEN ACQUAINTED FOR YEARS AND HAVE A GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP. FRANCIS WAS NOT INCLUDED IN A PERSONAL CONVERSATION BETWEEN TWO PRIME MINISTERS, WHICH LASTED ABOUT 1 1/2 HOURS, AND HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT TRANSPIRED AT THAT MEETING, BUT HAS FURNISHED US FOLLOWING RUNDOWN OF OFFICIAL TALKS:

1. ANZUK: KIRK REAFFIRMED NZ'S INTENTIONS OF MAINTAINING ITS FORCES IN SINGAPORE/MALAYSIA AS LONG AS WELCOMED. THEY INTEND TO ESTABLISH SEPARATE NEW ZEALAND COMMAND BY END OF JANUARY AND TO OPERATE QUITE INDEPENDENTLY FROM THEN ON. A TRUNCATED ANZUK COMMAND (SNAS NEW ZEALAND) WOULD CONTINUE UNTIL AUSTRALIA COMPLETES ITS WITHDRAWAL -- WHICH IS NOW UNDERWAY -- IN FEW MONTHS AT WHICH TIME THE BRITISH WILL ALSO SET UP SEPARATE HEADQUARTERS. BRITISH AND NZ COMMANDS WILL COORDINATE ACTIVITIES THROUGH BILATERAL COMMITTEE AND WILL ASSIST ONE ANOTHER ON LOGISTICS PROBLEMS AND IN OTHER SERVICE AREAS. LEE OFFERED NO OBJECTION TO PLANS TO ABOLISH JOINT ANZUK COMMAND. HE STRESSED POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING BRITISH AND NZ MILITARY PRESENCE IN SINGAPORE/MALAYSIA. FRANCIS SAID NZ FORCES WOULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN ANY SIGNIFICANT WAY IN TRAINING OF SINGAPORE FORCES, BUT PLANNED TO STEP UP JOINT TRAINING WITH MALAYSIA.

2. REGIONALISM: KIRK OUTLINED HIS THINKING ABOUT DEVELOPING CLOSER REGIONAL TIES. LEE WELCOMED KIRK'S PROPOSAL THAT INDONESIA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND ESTABLISH AN INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE ARRANGEMENT. HE MADE NO EFFORT TO HAVE SINGAPORE INCLUDED. KIRK ALSO OUTLINED

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HIS THINKING ABOUT BROADER GROUPING OF EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES INCLUDING PRC BUT EXCLUDING INDIA ON GROUNDS IT HAD LITTLE IN COMMON WITH REST OF REGION. LEE AGREED THAT REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL GROUPINGS WERE USEFUL, BUT THEY SHOULD BE KEPT LOOSE AND INFORMAL. IT WOULD NOT BE IN INTEREST OF REGION TO ORGANIZE INTO TIGHT ECONOMIC UNIT OR UNITS FOR FEAR THIS WOULD TEND TO ISOLATE REGION FROM OTHER MAJOR TRADING BLOCS. HE STRESSED PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO

SINGAPORE OF MAINTAINING OPEN TRADING RELATIONSHIPS, PARTICULARLY WITH US WHICH HE FEARED MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE IF SINGAPORE ALIGNED ITSELF WITH ITS OWN REGIONAL BLOC.

3. JAPAN: THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION ABOUT FUTURE OF JAPAN IN REGION. KIRK EXPRESSED FEAR OF GROWING ECONOMIC STRENGTH OF JAPN AND POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECT THIS COULD HAVE ON SMALLER COUNTRIES OF REGION. LEE'S CONCERN WAS THAT AN AMERICAN WITHDRAWAL FROM THE REGION WOULD WEAKEN JAPAN'S TIES WITH AND CONFIDENCE IN THE US AND CAUSE HER TO SEEK CLOSER TIES WITH CHINA OR RUSSIA. THESE DEVELOPMENTS, LEE THOUGHT, WOULD INCREASE THE VULNERABILITY OF THE COUNTRIES OF SEA TO CHINESE OR RUSSIAN PENETRATION. HE SAID US PRESENCE IN REGION WAS NECESSARY TO MAINTENANCE POLITICAL BALANCE AND REGIONAL STABILITY.

4. PAUA NEW GUINEA: LEE WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT FUTURE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA, REFERRING TO IT AS POTENTIALLY ANOTHER CONGO. HE INDICATED SINGAPORE MAY ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH PAPUA NEW GUINEA.

5. BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP: FRANCIS SAID THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION OF JOINT SCIENTIFIC AND RESEARCH PROJECTS AND OTHER TECHNICAL MATTERS WHICH WERE NOT OF GREAT CONSEQUENCE.
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To: STATE
Type: TE
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